DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 068 751 AC 012 850

AUTHOR Zapata, Fabio A.
TITLE Factors Associated with Farmer's Perception of Agricultural Extension in Antioquia, Columbia.
PUB DATE 71
NOTE 7p.; Summary of Ed.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.65 HC-$3.29
DESCRIPTORS Adult Educators; *Agricultural Education; Agricultural Laborers; Agricultural Production; Agriculture; *Doctoral Theses; *Extension Agents; *Extension Education; Statistical Data

ABSTRACT

Farmers' perceptions of Extension services and Extension agents representing agricultural organizations in Antioquia, Columbia, were studied. A total of 370 interviews were made with clients of three Extension Services. A positive correlation was found between the client's perception of the agent and years of schooling, economic status, practices learned and used, and level of contact with the agent. However, the perception of the Extension Services was not associated with the years of schooling, economic status, or level of contact. Only the number of practices used by the client was associated with favorable perception. The most favorable perception was of the Coffee Growers Federation, the oldest organization; the least favorable perception was of the Columbian Agricultural Institute, the newest service. (RS)

ED 068751

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH,
EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

The Findings from Extension Studies

FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH FARMER'S PERCEPTION OF AGRICULTURAL EXTENSION IN ANTIOQUIA, COLUMBIA

by

Fabio A. Zapata

A Summary of an Ed.D. dissertation in Extension Education prepared under the supervision of Dr. L. L. Pesson, Louisiana State University, December, 1971.

A copy of the complete dissertation is on file in the main Library at Louisiana State University.

AC012 850

R & T--Summary No. 34

The Problem

Perception is the interpretation or meaning an individual gives to a situation from his own point of view and it is based on his past experiences. From the standpoint of agricultural extension, if a farmer or client perceives the Extension Service and the Extension agent as helpful or important in finding ways to solve his own problems, he is likely to accept their teachings; otherwise, the efforts of the Extenionists will be futile and resistance to change will be evident. Many assistance programs have failed for the lack of positive perception of any practical benefit.

The Setting of the Study

The study was conducted in the State of Antioquia, Columbia, using three main Extension organizations operating in the State: the Colombian Agricultural Institute (ICA), the Coffee Growers Federation and the Secretariat of Agriculture of the State of Antioguia. The three Extension organizations had similar as well as contrasting aspects, but the Federation was the one which showed more continuity and better organization. It was also the oldest and the only one to originate in a growers association. The newest organization was ICA, having been in existence for only three years.

Objective and Hypothesis

The main objective of this study was to determine the clients' perception of the Extension Services and of the Extension agent who represented the agricultural extension organizations. The perception of these clients was associated to other selected independent variables,

testing null hypothesis postulated with the following variables: schooling, age, economic status, practices learned, practices used, knowledge of agricultural concepts, exposure to mass media and contact with Extension personnel.

Research Design

A prepared personal interview schedule was used in obtaining data for this study. It included two main parts: 1) personal and face data for the independent variables, and 2) the two perception scales. The interview schedule was pretested twice. The 17 interviews of the second pretesting were used for an item analysis of the perception scales. It was found that six items of the Extension agent scale and five of the Extension Service scale were significant at the .05 level of significance by the method of comparison of extreme qualities, thereby, showing consistent discrimination.

The sample of clients to be interviewed was selected from the lists of clients that the Extension agent and/or practices had of the farmers being served by the Extension Service. The lists made up a group of only five percent of Antioquia's farmers. A total of 370 interviews were made; 136 for ICA, 127 for the Federation and 107 for the Secretariat. The interviews were made during the months of August and September, 1971, by the author, assisted by six fourth-year college students at the School of Agriculture, National University at Medellin. The clients were interviewed at their homes, farms, or whenever it was possible to locate them.

Analysis of Data

On completition of the interview schedules, all data were coded and cards punched for use with electronic computers. The Louisiana State University Computer Research Center facilities were used to make the statistical tests. The statistical tests used were: chi-square, Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance, least squares analysis of variance and correlation coefficient.

Findings

The study revealed that the organizations' clientele were as different as the organizations themselves, even though there were no differences in relation to clientele family type, size of families, need for credit and pattern of paying for groceries. The Federation's clientele were the ones who requested more advice from Extension personnel, learned more practices, used more practices out of those learned, had more practices related to sources of income and had better perceptions of the Extension agent and the Extension Service, compared with the clientele of ICA and the Secretariat.

A positive association was found between the favorableness of clients' perception of the Extension agent and years of schooling, economic status, practices learned, practices used, knowledge of agricultural concepts, mass media exposure, level of contact with Extension personnel and knowledge of agricultural organizations. No association was found for age.

It was found that the clients' perception of the Extension Service was not associated with clients' years of schooling, economic status,

level of contact with Extension personnel and age.

When perception was examined within the organizations, the associations found were somewhat different to those found for the whole sample. For ICA's clients, perception was associated with economic status, practices used, mass media, knowledge of agricultural concepts, level of contact with Extension personnel and knowledge of Extension organizations. Perception of the Extension Service was associated only with knowledge of agricultural concepts and knowledge of Extension organizations.

For the Federation's clients, there were associations only between perception of the Extension agent and practices learned and practices used. For perception of the Extension Service, there was an association only with practices used.

For the Secretariat's clients positive associations were found with practices learned, practices used, and level of contact with Extension personnel. There were negative associations between perceptions of the Extension agent and economic status and knowledge of agricultural concepts. For perceptions of the Extension Service, positive associations were found with practices learned, practices used, and levels of contact. There were negative associations with years of schooling and economic status.

The most significant finding was that only the number of practices used by the client was associated with favorableness of clients' perception for all of the three Extension organizations.

Conclusions

The clients perception of the Extension agent and the Extension Service was generally favorable, but it is important to keep in mind that the clients interviewed came from a group which made up only five per cent of the farmer population of Antioquia. The most favorable perception was exhibited for the Federation which was the oldest of the organizations and the least favorable perception was for ICA, which was the newest organization working in Antioquia.

The association of factors with the clients perception of the Extension agent and of the Extension Service yielded three fundamental findings which in turn could change the philosophy and policies of the Extension Services in Colombia.

The first finding was that perception of Extension Service was different to that of Extension agent. There were no associations between clients' perception of Extension Service with clients' years of schooling, economic status and level of contact with Extension personnel. Therefore, it is possible to infer that some problems existed with Extension work in Colombia. Since perception is based on past experiences, it is important to ascertain the factors that influence the more educated, those with higher economic status and those with more contact with Extension personnel to have wide variations in perception.

The second finding was obtained when the association of perception with the factors in the study was examined within the organizations. The results were so different that they lead to the

conclusion that it will be necessary for each organization to revise its Extension program and the methodology to carry it out.

The third finding was that the only variable to be positively associated with perception of the Extension agent for all three organizations was the number of practices used by the farmer. This finding lead to the conclusion that the most important thing was what the client did, and that what he did should have economic value and be successfully applied from his point of view. The economic aspect was so important because money is the universal exchange element to a acquire those things necessary to satisfy felt needs, especially when they are related to physical needs.

ERIC Clearinghouse
SEP 27 1972
on Adult Education